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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING




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MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 
SUBJECT: Presentation on the MEAP-Access Assessment

On April 7, 2007, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) issued regulations regarding alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. The regulations on modified academic achievement standards permit a state, as part of its assessment and accountability system, to adopt such standards and to develop an assessment aligned with the modified academic achievement standards for students with disabilities.

To assist states in developing an assessment, the USED offered the opportunity to apply for a grant. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) applied for one of these grants to develop an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards and for an on-line professional learning system that can be adopted and adapted by other states. MDE received the three year, \$1,000,000 grant award in March 2008. After receiving the grant, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) and the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services developed a pilot assessment (Modified Full Independence) that meets the standards outlined in the federal regulations.

As part of the assessment development, draft student eligibility criteria were distributed widely for public input. One of the issues raised in the feedback was the name of the assessment. Therefore, to avoid confusion among the other Michigan alternate assessments the original title of the proposed assessment, Modified Full Independence, has been changed to MEAP-Access. Feedback from the field indicated that the title MEAP-Access is a better descriptor of the assessment.

The MEAP-Access Pilot is being administered to students during a two-week window in January and February 2009. The Michigan Department of Education will then analyze the results. OEAA staff will present the results of the MEAP-Access pilot at the March meeting of the Board. OEAA staff will also present a recommended format for MEAP-Access based upon the results of the pilot, and will request the approval of the State Board of Education to use the recommended format for Fall 2009 implementation.

Development and implementation of the MEAP-Access aligns with the State Board of Education's Vision and Principals of Universal Education. It recognizes diverse abilities and needs and adheres to Universal Design for assessment.

More detailed information regarding MEAP-Access can found in Appendix A.

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MEAP-Access Pilot Assessment

Introduction

Implementation of the Winter 2009 Pilot for the Modified Full Independence assessments—now commonly referred to as MEAP-Access—is underway. This newly developed assessment is based on the regulations recently issued by the U. S. Department of Education (USED) that permit a state to develop alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards.

The statewide administration of the MEAP-Access pilot is one of the first steps in improving access to grade-level assessments for a number of students with disabilities who are currently receiving grade-level instruction. The purpose of the pilot is to determine if the development process has been successful in producing an assessment format that is more appropriate for participating students.

Results of the pilot will be used to guide recommendations for the first implementation of MEAP-Access, which is scheduled for fall 2009. When MEAP-Access becomes operational, the results will be used for calculating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Federal Grant

The Michigan Department of Education was awarded a USED grant to develop such an assessment by modifying existing Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) assessments in order to provide improved access to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility for participation in this assessment. The MEAP-Access pilot has been developed through a collaboration of MDE offices, along with teams of Michigan educators and stakeholders who are familiar with the population and content being assessed. The MEAP-Access is designed to complete the continuum of state assessments, which is provided in the following table:

State Assessment Continuum

Assessment	Type of Assessment	Based Upon
MEAP/MME	General	GLCEs/HSCEs
MEAP/MME with Accommodations	General	GLCEs/HSCEs
MEAP-Access	AA-MAS*	GLCEs
Functional Independence	AA-AAS**	Extended GLCEs
Supported Independence	AA-AAS	Extended GLCEs
Participation	AA-AAS	Extended GLCEs

*AA-MAS Alternate Assessment-Modified Achievement Standards

**AA-AAS Alternate Assessment-Alternate Achievement Standards

Description of the MEAP-Access Pilot

Two forms of mathematics and English language arts (ELA) are being piloted with pre-selected students with disabilities who are enrolled in grades 3 through 8. The pilot items for each grade and content area are being drawn from a pool of MEAP items written for the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) at the corresponding grade level.

The MEAP-Access pilot assessments are designed to be shorter in length and less difficult than MEAP, while maintaining appropriately challenging content that reflects the state's general GLCEs. As with other state assessments, universal design criteria are applied to maximize accessibility.

English Language Arts (ELA)

The MEAP-Access ELA Pilot Tests have two components: Reading and Writing. Students are asked to read three independent passages and answer seven comprehension questions that follow each passage. The passage types include at least one narrative and one informational passage. The third passage may be either a narrative or an informational passage. All reading questions are multiple-choice (MC) items with a point value of one.

The writing portion of the assessment has two parts. For the first part, students respond to a prompt and are measured on their ability to write based on their knowledge and experience. Their responses are scored according to the MEAP six-point rubric. The second part of the writing portion is called "Response to Student Writing." A short piece of student writing is provided in the booklet that contains errors. Students are asked to answer three MC items (one point each) to identify the errors in the piece of student writing.

One of the unique and significant parts of the ELA pilot assessment is the use of enhanced directions on some of the pilot forms that the test administrator reads at the time of assessment in order to assist students in accessing reading and writing portions of the pilot test. The Assessment Plan Writing Team, comprised of Michigan educators familiar with the population being assessed and the content area of ELA, developed the enhanced directions based on the learning characteristics of the student population that is potentially eligible to take the MEAP-Access. Table 1 describes each form by grade level.

TABLE 1: MEAP-Access ELA Pilot Models			
Grade	Form A	Form B	No. of Items (both forms)
3	• Three-choice multiple-choice items	• Three-choice multiple-choice items • Enhanced Directions	24
4	• Four-choice multiple-choice items	• Three-choice multiple-choice items	24
5	• Four-choice multiple-choice items	• Three-choice multiple-choice items • Enhanced Directions	24
6	• Three-choice multiple-choice items	• Three-choice multiple-choice items • Enhanced Directions	24
7	• Four-choice multiple-choice items	• Three-choice multiple-choice items	24
8	• Four-choice multiple-choice items	• Three-choice multiple-choice items • Enhanced Directions	24

Mathematics

Two forms of the mathematics tests (Form A and Form B) are being administered during the pilot. All mathematics items are in a multiple-choice (MC) item format. Form A includes three answer choices for each item in grade 3; four choices in grades 4 through 8. Form B includes three answer choices for each item in grades 4 through 8. (Grade 3 is piloting Form A only, since it already has three answer choices in MEAP). Each MEAP-Access pilot item has a point value of one. The table below describes each form.

MEAP-Access Mathematics PILOT Forms Grades 3-8

TABLE 2: MEAP-Access Mathematics Pilot Models				
Grade	Form A	Form B	No. of Items	
			Part 1	Part 2
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Three-choice multiple-choice items • NO calculators allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No grade 3 Form B (because no grade 3 MEAP-Access Pilot items have 4 answer choices) 	38 (only 1 part)	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Four-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Three-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	28	13
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Four-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Three-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	36	16
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Four-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Three-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	25	15
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Four-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Three-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	29	20
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Four-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In strand and GLCE order • Three-choice multiple-choice items • Part 1 NO calculators allowed • Part 2 calculators allowed 	7	25

Who is assessed with MEAP-Access?

When fully implemented, all students who have a current individualized education program (IEP) and meet all the finalized criteria may be assessed with MEAP-Access. Recommendations for these criteria are based on results from a statewide survey conducted last November and on specific federal regulations. For example, federal regulations require that a student's IEP goals be linked to the grade level content standards for the grade of enrollment for this assessment. Also, a student must have access to, and instruction in, that grade-level content.

For the 2009 Winter Pilot, students with IEPs were selected to participate based on preliminary assessment information from Fall 2008.

Winter 2009 Pilot Schedule

Materials for the Winter 2009 Pilot for MEAP-Access are arriving in districts January 20-23, 2009. Materials are addressed to the MI-Access District Coordinator listed in Educational Entity Master (EEM).

A list of all schools involved with the pilot and names of participating students is included in the district pilot materials, along with one printed copy of the MEAP-Access Coordinator and Assessment Administrator Manual for the Winter 2009 Pilot. Additional copies and a companion PowerPoint presentation may be downloaded from the OEAA website at www.mi.gov/oeaa. A video presentation that introduces information about the pilot and planning for the test is also available at:

<http://www.mistreamnet.org/videtail.php?who=mde010909n01>

Each school's pilot materials have been pre-packaged and are ready to send directly to schools when received by the MI-Access District Coordinator. The pilot test dates are scheduled from January 23 through February 12, 2009, but testing could begin as soon as materials arrive.

Use of the Pilot Results

Nearly all Michigan schools and districts have at least some of their students with disabilities participating in this pilot. Districts are encouraged to complete this pilot assessment with each student that has been chosen to participate. The results of each form of the assessment will be carefully analyzed to determine which testing format works best—a key ingredient in developing these assessments for initial implementation, which is scheduled for Fall 2009.